

## **Geography Unit – The Impact of Human Societies**

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National Geography Standards:

4. The physical and human characteristics of places.
11. Patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface.
12. The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement.
14. How human actions modify the physical environment.
16. The changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution and importance of resources.
18. How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

### **Learning Objectives:**

Unit objective – Given information on the impact of human societies, ecological footprint, and an introduction to global issues and terms such as poverty and inequity, students will create an individual and structural action plan to address a global issue such as reduce their footprint and effect sustainability or reduce poverty in a region or globally.

1. Given information in various forms on human progression from hunter/gatherer societies to industrialized societies, students will create a storyboard that highlights the stages and transitions along this continuum.
2. Given the opportunity to complete the ecological footprint quiz for 3 different groups, students will create a graphic display of their own ecological footprint.
3. Given information on the ecological footprint of the conventional potato and french fries, students will determine and graph the ecological footprint of other products such as the American meal of hamburger, fries and soda.
4. Given the opportunity to view “World in the Balance” and read current information, students will discuss and analyze current population and consumption trends and list personal and structural solutions to these global issues.
5. Given the opportunity to “experience” inequity, students will summarize the patterns of global inequity.
6. Given information on poverty and globalization, students will argue a case for or against globalization emphasizing its impact on human societies around the world.

### **Objective #1:**

1. Introduction: Think/Pair/Share - Think about your last meal. Where did it come from? How did you get the various foods that made up that meal? Where do you think each food came from? Introduce the idea that societies must get food somehow and that there is a typical “progression” that societies follow from hunter/gatherer to industrialized like today.
2. Provide notes for students on the characteristics of each phase. Make the process interactive by having students then examine notes, circle key transition words, underline advantages of each stage, etc.
3. Students use notes and book to create a storyboard that shows this progression including the 4 stages and the transition elements that occurred in between.

4. Think/Pair/Share – Define progress. How does progress relate to your storyboard? In what ways does your storyboard reflect progress? Discuss student ideas and introduce the idea that each phase had a different impact on the earth and that progress can be measured in various ways.

Student reaction: many students didn't display their understanding of each society building upon the other through their storyboards, but they were able to explain how the storyboard related to progress, each society building upon the next.

**Objective #2:**

5. Students complete Ecological Footprint quiz online at [www.redefiningprogress.org](http://www.redefiningprogress.org). Follow prompts to quiz. Students complete the quiz for: him/herself, use the same answers but a different country, the answers they think someone from a developing nation might have. Record all three sets of data including: # of acres required for resources/sinks, # of planets if everyone lived like you, # of acres by sector (food, transportation, housing, etc.).
6. Provide overhead of Factors contributing to an Ecological Footprint. Students predict the impact each type of society from storyboard would have on planet. Emphasize the number of inputs required for industrialized societies v. hunger-gatherer societies.
7. Students create a poster of their own footprint. They will visually represent the data collected from their answers to the ecological footprint quiz including: number of acres for all four categories, total number of acres, and number of planets.

Student reaction: I had a few students who didn't understand the concept until after several explanations. Other students got it and didn't believe in it – saying it was just a number and didn't mean anything. I invited the doubt, but the students didn't have anything to support their claims, so they went along with it inserting comments on reflections here and there.

**Objective #3:**

8. Think/Pair/Share: What do you think it involves bringing a basic potato from farm to your dinner table? Describe the events or use a graphic organizer to represent.
9. Show students overheads of inputs for conventional potato and an organic potato. Together with students on board or overhead, complete an input chart for French fries.
10. Have students read "Hamburger, Fries and a Cola: What did it Take to Produce This Favorite American Meal?" in pairs or groups using marking strategy. Debrief: Students select one word to represent the reading and explain reasons for choice. Solicit one word and discuss reactions. Emphasize factors of food, transportation, energy and loss of land as part of ecological footprint of this meal.
11. Students brainstorm ideas on how to reduce the inputs for their favorite meal. Create a class list.

Student reaction: Students really got this. They were very shocked and I think that it was a real eye-opener. It helped to make the EF more relevant too. Many pledged to reduce the amount of processed food they eat.

**Objective #4:**

12. Provide notes for students on the impact of EF (impact = population affluence technology) defining and providing examples of each factor.
13. Show students “World in the Balance: The People Paradox”. Divide the class in to thirds and students in each group take notes on only one country: India, Japan, or Kenya. Students should take two-column notes on: Population facts/issues and Population solutions. Following the movie, students summarize their learning of the two countries for which they didn’t take notes.
14. Students form groups with others of the same country. They answer questions to transform the facts they recorded into trends. Each group shares what they learned and students take notes as the class discusses these trends.
15. Give notes on sustainability, personal solutions and structural solutions. Students copy and read from It’s All Connected.

Student reaction: Students really enjoyed “The People Paradox” and they were captivated by the human stories told. To this day they can explain the population trends described in the movie.

**Objective #5:**

16. Conduct the “Let Them Eat Cake” activity from Facing the Future’s People and the Planet curriculum guide. Students write a personal reflection and then from discussion groups to answer certain questions relating the simulation to the real world.
17. Students complete a KWL for global poverty. Conduct the “Take Steps for Equity” activity from Facing the Future’s People and the Planet curriculum guide. Students complete a 3-2-1 on what they learned. Students write 3 things they learned about their group, 2 things they found surprising about another group, and 1 workable solution. Discuss.

Student reaction: They definitely got this activity and they were able to relate the cake simulation to the real world. Their sense of justice prevailed as many felt bad for Africa and Latin America. Some shared, but others didn’t even think to going to the US/Canada for cake.

**Objective #6:**

18. Use tea party reading strategy for reading on poverty from It’s All Connected. Students then read the text and take notes on main ideas. Discuss issues on poverty.
19. Students read about globalization from It’s All Connected and create a “foldable” for advantages and disadvantages. Students write an argument either for or against globalization providing reasons and examples. Conduct an informal debate.
20. Discuss the L of previous KWL on poverty.

**Unit Objective:**

21. Students brainstorm global issues studied over the last weeks first individually and then with partners. The class forms a list.
22. Review the differences between personal and structural solutions.
23. Go over the Action plan project with students. Have students select issues, conduct research and create an action plan that highlights both changes in their personal actions and structural policies that can affect their selected global issue. This can be in the form of a web page, pamphlet, poster, letter to editor of newspaper, etc.
24. Students present Action plans to class.
25. Students complete a survey giving input on unit and what they learned.